

Published and Copyright (c) 1999 - 2007
All Rights Reserved

Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
Dana P. Jacobson, Publisher/Managing Editor
Joseph Mirando, Managing Editor
Rob Mahlert, Associate Editor

Atari Online News, Etc. Staff

Dana P. Jacobson -- Editor
Joe Mirando -- "People Are Talking"
Michael Burkley -- "Unabashed Atariophile"
Albert Dayes -- "CC: Classic Chips"
Rob Mahlert -- Web site
Thomas J. Andrews -- "Keeper of the Flame"

With Contributions by:

Fred Horvat

To subscribe to A-ONE, change e-mail addresses, or unsubscribe,
log on to our website at: www.atarinews.org
and click on "Subscriptions".
OR subscribe to A-ONE by sending a message to: dpj@atarinews.org
and your address will be added to the distribution list.
To unsubscribe from A-ONE, send the following: Unsubscribe A-ONE
Please make sure that you include the same address that you used to
subscribe from.

To download A-ONE, set your browser bookmarks to one of the
following sites:

<http://people.delphiforums.com/dpj/a-one.htm>
Now available:
<http://www.atarinews.org>

Visit the Atari Advantage Forum on Delphi!
<http://forums.delphiforums.com/atari/>

=~::~~::~=

~ MS Compliance On Track ~ Iowa-MS Settlement! ~ Gamers Play At Work!

-* Cybersecurity Still A Concern *-
-* Pentagon E-Mail System Is Breached! *-
-* Judge Strikes Down Part of The Patriot Act *-

$$= \sim = \sim = \sim =$$

```
->From the Editor's Keyboard          "Saying it like it is!"
   " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " "
```

Labor Day Weekend has come and gone, but summer is still here, with a vengeance! This past week was perfect - temps in the 70s all week, until Friday when it soared into the 90s. Wiped me right out! I'm not one to usually wish this, but we sure could use a good dose of rain around here! First, to cool things down, and the second to try and revive my lawn which has turned an ugly beige!

So, I don't have much to say this week. And, I caught a glimpse of Joe's column this week - he said enough for the both of us! So, while I find a way to cool off (we closed the pool last weekend!), I'll let you find your own source of cool and enjoy this week's issue!

Until next time...

==~==~==~==

Final Reminder ACEC Swap Meet This Saturday

ACEC Vintage Computer and Video Game Swap Meet September 8, 2007
ATARI COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS
OF COLUMBUS, OHIO
VINTAGE COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAME SWAP MEET

September 8, 2007
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. EDT
Oakland Park Community Center
980 Lenore St.

All vintage and classic computers, video games, systems, accessories, games, and software invited!

Vendor and Flea Marketeer donation: Free!
Shoppers and onlookers donation: Free!

Further info:
 chwbr...@ee.net Charles (614) 447-9789
 rar...@columbus.rr.com

=~::~~==

PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Good ladies, morning and gentlemen, goys and birls.

Okay, that got the silliness out of my system for a while. Now we can get to some real... well, "stuff".

Boy, you guys don't know how lucky you are. I just deleted a bunch of stuff I'd written last night. I decided that I didn't need to, as our commander-in-chief might say, beat a dead horse to death. I'm going to truncate the main points and get you to the news and stuff as quickly and as painlessly as possible, okay? Okay.

Things have gotten strange in politics in the past week, and I'm amazed that one party can extol their virtues while rushing around, trying to dissociate themselves from formerly well-thought-of members of their own party. Please notice as well that there hasn't been a peep from the other side. Perhaps the other side finally realizes that the so-called conservatives will do their work for them, and more heartlessly than they ever could have.

But the really interesting thing here is that Senator Craig was (at least at the time of this writing) thinking of not resigning. Well, that's his call, no matter what other members of his party say. It's his decision as to whether or not he resigns. End of story.

I give it another week or so, and then the general mindset will be, depending on who you ask, either that the good senator has been the target of unfair influence, or that he's a 'bad egg' who deserves to be cast out from the good graces of the other lofty members of the club (like Jim McGreevey, David Vitter and Jeff Gannon/Jim Guckert, I wonder?). I doubt that anyone on either side (since both sides are conservative... with the liberals sitting quietly on the sidelines, wondering what it's all about) will stop to think about the actual charges. There was no minor involved, no threat or coercion, no body parts that are usually considered as "naughty bits" displayed, and no hint of any enticement toward any illegal activity. It's not like he's accused of exposing himself to a 12 year old and offering him opium. I can understand the local police constabulary being involved in trying to 'clean out' what they consider to be an undesirable element, and I'd guess that most of the arrests made in this circumstance end in pleas and a promise to stay away from wherever they were apprehended in the future. The whole situation reminds me of a line from a Robin Williams movie: "These are conservative republicans. They don't care if you're a pig, they only care if you're a fag."

And THAT brings me to Jerry Lewis. During last week's telethon, he made

use of the word "fag". He apologized, and that seems to have placated most people who took offense. But I've just got to say, "C'mon, folks. If you're a homosexual, you've almost certainly had to deal with more offensive words than 'fag'." If not, you really need to get out in the world more, you silly little moe. <grin>

Well, let's get to the news, hints, tips and info from the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup
=====

Jo Even Skarstein posts:

"I've done a lot of work on Taskbar lately, mostly because I switched from N.AES to XaAES last year and had to fix Taskbar accordingly. Now large parts of the code has been completely rewritten, and many bugs eliminated.

There was a particularly nasty bug that would cause a bus error under certain circumstances, so hopefully the problems many has had with poor stability should be gone now.

The new beta is available at <http://atari.nvg.org/Taskbar/>. Please read the documentation carefully before installing, and report any bugs to me. Thanks."

Edward Baiz tells Jo Even:

"I will give it a try. I did have a problem with the previous version. I setup MagicNet on my Falcon (my Hades is toast) and Taskbar booted up fine, but about 90% of the time when I tried to do anything on the desktop I was told a program destroyed a block of memory. I found out it was Taskbar.

I am new to the Falcon, so it is probably me and not the program. I will load up the new beta and put in MagicNet and see what happens. Thanks for the support."

Jo Even replies:

"It was probably Taskbar and not you ;-) There was a really nasty bug in the previous release (3.99 from 2003 to 2006), it used an un-initialized pointer in the AV code."

Peter Schneider asks about partition sizes:

"what the largest partition KOBOLD could address without changing to GEMDOS mode?

My problem is to divide a 4.5 GB hard drive into the smallest possible number of partitions. I tried two, but that slows down copying speed very badly.

But I don't want to split that drive into 12 parts like the internal one, for that would mean 24 logical hard drives. And then, what about

the CD reader and burner or MO drive?

So, what is the most reasonable partition of a 4.5 GB drive?"

'PPera' tells Peter:

"Falcon, ST(E) is too slow for large partitions, especially for FAT32. In time of their design some 60MB was common capacity of drives..."

Coda chuckles and tells PPera:

"60mb if you were rich!"

'GMAN' picks up the ball from Coda and runs with it:

"Or if you took your MFM 40Gigger and used a Adaptec 4070 RLL instead of a 4000a host adapter."

Coda corrects GMAN:

"Gigger? A typo methinks ;-)

I used the 40 'megger' ;-) MFM and reformatted it on an RLL controller.... That extra 7Mb was heaven :D"

GMAN tells Coda:

"Oops, thanks. I was thinking in 2007 terms, I should have been thinking in 1987 terms.

Actually I think you came out with more than 7Mb didn't we? It was more like another third capacity. Close to 60 MB."

Coda replies:

"Maybe you're right. I know it was 47mb afterwards though. Maybe it was 30 or 32 before then? Hmm... 15 years fries the memory circuits... I just did a search and came up with this:
<http://kb.iu.edu/data/adlt.html#r1> "

GMAN tells Coda:

"See in the info on RLL it claims up to 50% increase, so yeah, a 40mb would be roughly 60mb.

But of course with formatting and OS overhead, it would most likely be around 50 something gb.

I have my old drive still mounted to the 4070 in a box O' crap out in my garage, i just might hook it up to my secondary PC's scsi card and see if

it will format the beast for giggles!!!!!"

Jason Harmon jumps in and posts:

"I just replaced the inner workings of my MegaFile 60 with an ICD ADISI ST connected to a 4GB UW SCSI drive. It is divided into 256MB partitions and is worlds faster than the MegaFile with its RLL drive could have ever thought about being. The machine is a stock 1040STFM with TOS 1.2. This was about the biggest partition size I could get."

Well folks, that's it for this time around. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

$$= \sim = \sim = \sim =$$
[illegible]
$$= \sim = \sim = \sim =$$

->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
 ~~~~~

## Wii Outsells Sony PS3 Three to One

Nintendo's Wii is still holding the top spot in its home country, but Sony's PlayStation 3 is gaining ground on the low-cost console. According to Japanese game magazine publisher Enterbrain, Nintendo sold 245,653 Wii consoles during the four weeks ending August 26. Sony sold 81,541 units of the PS3 during that same period.

Those figures translate to the Wii outselling the PS3 three to one in Japan. Nintendo's market lead is slowly but surely slipping. The ratio of Wii to PS3 sales was four to one in Nintendo's favor in July and six to one in June.

Sony is not the only game in town. Microsoft's Xbox 360 is also selling in Japan, but the Wii is also outselling the Xbox. Microsoft sold 11,288 Xbox 360s in Japan in August, Enterbrain reported.

Yankee Group analyst Mike Goodman called the console competition in Japan a two horse race. "First of all, Microsoft has never been much of a player

in Japan and I don't anticipate that it will be. Secondly, the PS3 is just too expensive," Goodman said. "Sony has to make some moves if it wants to compete with Nintendo in Japan."

One of the most obvious competitive advantages the Wii boasts is its \$249 price tag. That's about half the price of a PS3. By Goodman's estimates, Sony needs to slash the price of its next-generation console by between \$150 and \$200 if it wants to find its place in Japan's mass market.

Sony is plagued by another competitive disadvantage, mostly at Microsoft's hand. While more titles are now available for the PS3, Goodman noted, Sony does not have runaway hits for its platform. Nintendo has its Wii Sports, among other classic titles, and Microsoft's Xbox 360 boasts hits like Halo 3.

"Even when the base game is available across all platforms, the additional products that help drive sales are exclusive to another platform. In every case, Sony is not the content provider that's getting the exclusives on the best games," Goodman said. "This is a true role reversal. If you think back to PS2, Sony had the best and most exclusive titles."

Getting Sony back on track in Japan and in other markets might sound simple: Drop the price and secure some hot titles. But Sony's console life is complicated by Blu-ray. Sony already is taking a \$150 loss on each unit thanks to its decision to add Blu-ray capabilities into its gaming system, Goodman noted. If Sony shaves \$150 off the PS3's price, it would amount to a \$300 loss on each unit.

There doesn't seem to be a good solution for Sony. The company might have boosted the number of Blu-ray-capable devices on the market and succeeded in driving down manufacturing costs for the DVD player, but that might turn out to have been a fatal mistake.

"The reality is two studios decided to drop Blu-ray last week. You have to ask if this is the right decision," Goodman said. "It may be that in two or three years it's a different story. The book still has to be written. But the early chapters are not very pretty for Sony."

#### Video-Game Review: 'Metroid Prime 3'

Action heroine Samus gets to face her evil twin in "Metroid Prime 3: Corruption," the final game in the science-fiction trilogy and the first for Nintendo's Wii.

The Wii's focus on casual games has meant a bounty of simple titles for the whole family.

But there's been a dearth of action for the hardcore gaming set. "Corruption" finally provides Wii owners something meatier than bowling or tennis.

This \$49.99, T-rated title pushes the Wii to its limits.

The graphics - while not up to Xbox 360 or PlayStation 3 standards - surpass anything else available for the Wii, which lacks high-definition output.

Most importantly, the wireless controls actually work. The game makes full use of the Wii's remote and nunchuk attachment for looking and moving around, shooting and jumping.

The controls are perhaps the biggest initial obstacle players will face. I found myself wrestling with them instead of the enemies.

But like anything new, you just have to give it some time. It took me a several hours, but I eventually came to appreciate how motion-sensitive controls can enliven a first-person shooter. The controls become an extension of your arms.

The tactile sensation of flicking the nunchuk to throw a grapple beam and yank something off a wall is unlike anything I've experienced before in a video game. Instead of tapping a button to pull a lever, simply twist and move your hand around to pull it, like you would in the real world.

And then there's the satisfying rumble of a fully charged Power Beam blast.

Fans will appreciate how "Corruption" wraps up the story of armor-clad bounty hunter Samus, and her evil twin, Dark Samus.

There's no multiplayer, but the deep single-player saga includes a cast of fellow Galactic Federation pals in a continuing battle against evil Space Pirates. It's not as corny as it sounds, and the enemies, ranging from packs of crawling bugs to oversized fire-tossing dragons, are quite scary and devious.

There's more than just running and gunning, too. Sometimes you'll have to solve puzzles, while other levels are more of a carnival shooting gallery. The overall experience is one of exploration, puzzle-solving and action that kept me wanting to push farther.

Owners of rival consoles can boast all they want about exclusive blockbuster titles like "Halo 3" for the Xbox 360 or "Warhawk" for the PlayStation 3. With "Corruption," the Wii has an excellent new video game all to its own.

Three-and-a-half-stars out of four.

#### Schwarzenegger Appeals Ruling On Video Game Law

California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger appealed on Wednesday a federal judge's decision striking down a state law barring the sale of violent video games to minors.

U.S. District Judge Ronald Whyte ruled last month that the law passed in 2005 was unconstitutional, adding there was no evidence that violent video games were any more harmful than depictions of violence in television shows and movies.

Schwarzenegger, who acted in many violent movies, argued that violent video games should be for adults only.

"Many studies show the link between playing ultra-violent video games and violent behavior. We have a responsibility to our kids and our communities to protect against the effects of games that depict



ultra-violent actions," Schwarzenegger said in a statement.

"We protect our children from buying inappropriate movies and ought to be able to protect them from buying inappropriate video games as well," he said.

Schwarzenegger's appeal was filed with the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California.

#### Britain To Review Video Game, Web Laws For Young

Britain's government said on Thursday it had launched an inquiry to see what new legal measures may be required to protect children from the impact of violent video games and Web pornography.

Britain already has extensive rules covering broadcasters and the video industry, but said it needed to keep pace with developments on the Web and may need to bring in new regulation.

Regulation of video content in Britain became compulsory in 1984. Still, a number of games have been withdrawn by retailers in recent years after complaints about the level of violence shown. Some studies have suggested a link between video game violence and aggressive behavior in children.

The review, which is backed by Prime Minister Gordon Brown, will look at how well children are protected from harmful and inappropriate material on the Internet and video games.

The government said it appointed clinical psychologist Tanya Byron, who has written books on child care and made television programs on parenting, to lead the six-month review.

Culture Secretary James Purnell said he wanted children to enjoy new media without their childhood being harmed.

The review, which will not cover television content, will also look at how advertisers may need to face new rules and consider the impact of user-generated content on the Internet.

#### One In Four Gamers Play At Work

Colleagues tapping away busily on their BlackBerry, phone or laptop at the office might not be as productive as they seem - with one in four video gamers admitting playing at work, even in meetings, according to an online survey.

A survey of 2,842 office workers conducted on a video game Web site found one in four people, or 24 percent, said they played video games during their working day.

Game play increased up the corporate ladder with more than one third, or 35 percent, of chief executives and other senior executives who took part in the survey admitting to playing games at work. They made up 8 percent of the survey.

But while 61 percent of those who play games at work said they did so during lunch or other official breaks, the survey by market researcher Information Solutions Group found one in seven, or 14 percent, admitted playing during business meetings or conference calls.

Two thirds of those said they did so at least once a month.

But the players claim it is not just for fun.

Eight out of 10 said playing a quick game helped them handle stress while about five in 10 said it helped strengthen their memory.

Carly Drum, managing director of executive recruitment firm Drum Associates, said it was not surprising that today's business professionals were casual video games users.

"We're seeing employees who are much more technologically savvy and familiar with all forms of new media from social networking to blogging and beyond," Drum said in a statement.

The study was based on an online survey conducted in June among visitors to the Web site of Seattle-based game provider PopCap.com.

=~::~~::~=

A-ONE's Headline News  
The Latest in Computer Technology News  
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Eudora E-mail Program Reborn As Open Source

Eudora, a pioneering e-mail program named after author Eudora Welty, is rising from a technical grave as an open source program after owner Qualcomm Inc quit selling the product in May.

Eudora routinely got strong reviews from computer magazines and had a loyal user base, but commercially it was overshadowed by software that Microsoft Corp included with new personal computers, International Business Machine's Lotus software and Web e-mail programs.

Qualcomm donated Eudora to the open-source community, which means that anybody is free to download and use it without paying for the product. Developers can also access the code, change it and share those changes.

On August 31 the Mozilla Foundation started distributing a test open-source version of Eudora, which was developed in the late 1980s as one of the first e-mail programs by a student at the University of Illinois.

Qualcomm acquired the software and hired its creator, Steve Dorner. At one point it was used by tens of millions of people.

Eudora is not yet promoting the product on its home page as it does its other titles including its popular Mozilla browser - a rival to Microsoft's Internet Explorer - and Thunderbird, another e-mail program.

The new version of Eudora is being developed under the code name Penelope and is available on the Web at <http://wiki.mozilla.org/Penelope>.

Mozilla has said it plans to develop both Eudora and Thunderbird.

#### AOL's Netscape.com Reverts To Being A Portal

AOL's venerable Netscape.com site, given an extreme Web 2.0 makeover 15 months ago and transformed into a spiffy social news site, will revert to being a traditional portal again.

In an official blog posting Thursday, a Netscape official explained that feedback from Netscape.com visitors prompted AOL's decision to scrap the site's redesign.

In short, people want the site to offer a more traditional Web portal experience, with news items chosen by Netscape.com editors instead of visitors, a prominent search engine box and links to AOL and Netscape services and content channels.

At press time, Netscape.com still retained the format it moved to in June of last year to compete with the likes of Web 2.0 social news upstarts like Digg.com.

However, those interested in checking out how Netscape.com will look like soon can see its forthcoming format at an alternate address.

Proving that everything old is new again, the new format looks a lot like Netscape.com before its social news metamorphosis.

After Netscape.com adopts its new/old portal format, AOL will move the social news site to another, as of yet undetermined, Web address, according to the blog posting.

The decision is not surprising. Jason Calacanis, the blogging entrepreneur who masterminded Netscape.com's transformation into a social news site, left AOL in November, shortly after Jonathan Miller was replaced as AOL's CEO. Miller had overseen AOL's acquisition of Calacanis' Weblogs Inc. in October 2005 and become a Calacanis mentor at AOL.

Then in June of this year, AOL relaunched its AOL News site with a raft of social news capabilities, such as the ability for people to vote on, rank, and share links to articles, photos, and video clips, as well as comment on them, duplicating many of Netscape.com's features.

Interestingly, AOL News apparently relies on the Netscape.com social news site for its section on stories submitted by readers. It's unclear if or how the transformation of Netscape.com will affect AOL News' user-submitted stories section.

The Pentagon on Tuesday said computer hackers gained access to an unclassified e-mail system in the office of Defense Secretary Robert Gates, but declined comment on a report that the Chinese army was responsible.

The security breach occurred late last spring when Defense Department monitors detected the penetration of "elements of an unclassified e-mail system" that was immediately taken off line, Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman told reporters.

The e-mail system, located in the office of the secretary of defense, did not return to full operation for up to three weeks.

"There was never any threat to the classified systems," Whitman said.

"There was no disruption to (defense) operations or adverse impact to ongoing operations that the department was conducting ... all precautionary measures were taken and the system was restored to service," he said.

Whitman spoke after the Financial Times newspaper quoted current and former U.S. officials as saying that Chinese People's Liberation Army hackers broke into a Defense Department network in June and removed data.

China rejected the report's claims.

"The Chinese government has consistently opposed and vigorously attacked according to the law all Internet-wrecking crimes, including hacking," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu said in Beijing.

"Some people are making wild accusations against China ... They are totally groundless and also reflect a Cold War mentality," she said.

The Financial Times cited one source familiar with the Pentagon incident as saying there was a "very high level of confidence ... trending towards total certainty" that the Chinese army was behind it.

Beijing has devoted a large part of its rising defense budget to developing more advanced technology, including computer capabilities.

But Whitman declined to comment on the hackers' suspected origins and other details of the incident.

"It is often very difficult to pinpoint the true origin of a particular intrusion," Whitman said.

"Even if you have some degree of confidence in origin, attaching origin to - for example - a nation state or an authorized activity of a government, that's a wholly different kind of thing," he said.

Hackers attempt to probe the Pentagon's Global Information Grid hundreds of times a day, he said, adding that major incidents are turned over to U.S. law enforcement and counterintelligence for investigation.

The Financial Times report came a week after German Chancellor Angela Merkel raised similar claims that Chinese hackers had infected German government ministries with spying programs.

Germany's Der Spiegel magazine reported last month that hackers believed to be linked to the Chinese army had gained access to Merkel's office and the German Foreign Ministry. China's Foreign Ministry denied that report as well.

### Judge Strikes Down Part of Patriot Act

A federal judge struck down parts of the revised USA Patriot Act on Thursday, saying investigators must have a court's approval before they can order Internet providers to turn over records without telling customers.

U.S. District Judge Victor Marrero said the government orders must be subject to meaningful judicial review and that the recently rewritten Patriot Act "offends the fundamental constitutional principles of checks and balances and separation of powers."

The American Civil Liberties Union had challenged the law, complaining that it allowed the FBI to demand records without the kind of court order required for other government searches.

The ACLU said it was improper to issue so-called national security letters, or NSLs - investigative tools used by the FBI to compel businesses to turn over customer information - without a judge's order or grand jury subpoena. Examples of such businesses include Internet service providers, telephone companies and public libraries.

Yusill Scribner, a spokeswoman for the U.S. attorney's office, said prosecutors had no immediate comment.

Jameel Jaffer, who argued the case for the ACLU, said the revised law had wrongly given the FBI sweeping authority to control speech because the agency was allowed to decide on its own - without court review - whether a company receiving an NSL had to remain silent or whether it could reveal to its customers that it was turning over records.

In 2004, ruling on the initial version of the Patriot Act, the judge said the letters violate the Constitution because they amounted to unreasonable search and seizure. He found that the nondisclosure requirement - under which an Internet service provider, for instance, would not be allowed to tell customers that it was turning over their records to the government - violated free speech.

After he ruled, Congress revised the Patriot Act in 2005, and the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals directed that Marrero review the law's constitutionality a second time.

The ACLU complained that Congress' revision of the law didn't go far enough to protect people because the government could still order companies to turn over their records and remain silent about it, if the FBI determined that the case involved national security.

The law was written "reflects an attempt by Congress and the executive to infringe upon the judiciary's designated role under the Constitution," Marrero wrote.

## DHS Head: Cybersecurity Remains A Concern

Fixing cybersecurity problems in the U.S. is a top priority at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, said the agency's leader, but lawmakers didn't focus on the issue during a hearing in Congress Wednesday.

Cybersecurity is a "very big issue" that DHS remains concerned about, said DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff, testifying before the House of Representatives Homeland Security Committee. Chertoff didn't go into details because much of the department's cybersecurity efforts are classified, he said.

"I can assure you that we are working with other elements of the federal government and giving highest priority an enhanced strategy with respect to cybersecurity," he said. Cybersecurity threats have "enormous potential to do damage to the United States in years to come," Chertoff added.

Chertoff testified before the committee in a hearing titled, "Holding the Department of Homeland Security Accountable for Security Gaps." But while cybersecurity problems continue inside and outside of the U.S. government, lawmakers focused on other issues during the hearing, including the hiring of border agents, training of bomb-sniffer dogs, and the scanning of airline cargo.

Just this week, the U.S. Department of Defense acknowledged a successful attack on an unclassified e-mail system earlier this year.

While not focusing on cybersecurity, committee chairman Bennie Thompson, a Mississippi Democrat, said DHS needs to improve in several areas. Thompson has criticized the department's cybersecurity efforts in the past, but cybersecurity issues were not on Thompson's list of top priorities for Chertoff in the remaining 16 months of U.S. President George Bush's administration.

Instead, Thompson called on Chertoff to fill vacancies at DHS, to finish regulations for container security at ports, and to implement a biometric air passenger screening program.

"We owe the American people security," Thompson said. "We owe them accountability. And most importantly, we owe them freedom from fear."

Other than the short Chertoff statement on cybersecurity, the issue did not come up again in more than 90 minutes of questions from lawmakers. Representative Mike Rogers, an Alabama Republican, used part of his question time to complain to Chertoff that many bomb-sniffing dogs used by DHS came from overseas.

Rogers urged Chertoff to find ways to breed bomb-sniffing and cadaver dogs in the U.S. "I'm concerned that we are increasingly relying on foreign imported dogs," he said.

## Justice Dept. Wary Of "Net Neutrality" Proposals

Antitrust authorities at the U.S. Justice Department on Thursday warned

regulators against imposing "network neutrality" regulations that would bar broadband Internet service companies from charging extra to some content providers.

In comments submitted to the Federal Communications Commission, the department said some net neutrality proposals "could deter broadband Internet providers from upgrading and expanding their networks to reach more Americans."

"Regulators should be careful not to impose regulations that could limit consumer choice and investment in broadband facilities," the department's antitrust chief, Thomas Barnett, said in a statement.

The concept of net neutrality is being studied by the FCC and has been the subject of much debate in Congress. Some lawmakers tried unsuccessfully to get net neutrality legislation passed last year.

Network neutrality proposals, backed by Internet content companies like Google Inc and eBay Inc, would bar Internet providers from charging extra fees to guarantee access to the Internet or give priority to some content.

However, the idea has been staunchly opposed by high-speed Internet providers such as AT&T Inc and Verizon Communications Inc.

Companies like eBay and Google worry that AT&T and Verizon will charge them more to get access to consumers or make it harder for consumers to get access to unaffiliated content.

The network providers counter that they would not block access to public Internet sites but want to offer private Internet-based services with faster speeds for uses such as downloading movies.

Last year, the FCC approved AT&T's purchase of BellSouth Corp after AT&T promised to maintain net neutrality of its high-speed Internet platform for two years. It was one of several key concessions that AT&T made to ease concerns about competition.

The comments from the Justice Department come on the heels of a report in June by antitrust experts at the Federal Trade Commission that expressed similar views and recommended that regulators "proceed with caution" on any such proposals.

The department said proponents of the Internet regulation had failed to show that many consumers had been harmed in a way that would justify government intervention.

It said there was nothing unusual about the practice of setting different levels of service and pricing, citing as an example the various mail options offered by the U.S. Postal Service.

"These differentiated products respond to market demand and expand consumers' choice," the department said.

Advocates of the network neutrality idea criticized the department's conclusions, saying regulations were needed because many consumers had little or no choice of broadband providers.

"This lack of competition and consumer choice for broadband access is the reason why (we support) preemptive safeguards to ensure that cable and

telephone companies do not destroy the Internet as we know it," said the Open Internet Coalition, a group comprised of consumer groups and Internet content companies such as Google.

On the other hand, the department's comments were met with praise from AT&T.

"We continue to urge policymakers to focus on the real issue of the broadband era, which is to promote the benefits of broadband services at affordable rates for all consumers," AT&T said in a statement.

#### Feds OK Fee For Priority Web Traffic

The Justice Department on Thursday said Internet service providers should be allowed to charge a fee for priority Web traffic.

The agency told the Federal Communications Commission, which is reviewing high-speed Internet practices, that it is opposed to "Net neutrality," the principle that all Internet sites should be equally accessible to any Web user.

Several phone and cable companies, such as AT&T Inc., Verizon Communications Inc. and Comcast Corp., have previously said they want the option to charge some users more money for loading certain content or Web sites faster than others.

The Justice Department said imposing a Net neutrality regulation could hamper development of the Internet and prevent service providers from upgrading or expanding their networks. It could also shift the "entire burden of implementing costly network expansions and improvements onto consumers," the agency said in its filing.

Such a result could diminish or delay network expansion and improvement, it added.

The agency said providing different levels of service is common, efficient and could satisfy consumers. As an example, it cited that the U.S. Postal Service charges customers different guarantees and speeds for package delivery, ranging from bulk mail to overnight delivery.

"Whether or not the same type of differentiated products and services will develop on the Internet should be determined by market forces, not regulatory intervention," the agency said in its filing.

The agency's stance comes more than two months after Federal Trade Commission Chairwoman Deborah Platt Majoras cautioned policy makers to enact Net neutrality regulation.

Such a regulation could prevent rather than promote Internet investment and innovation and have "significant negative effects for the economy and consumers," the Justice Department said in the filing.

Supporters of Internet regulation have said that phone and cable companies could discriminate against certain Web site and services.

However, the agency said it will continue to monitor and enforce any anticompetitive conduct to ensure a competitive broadband marketplace.



## Microsoft Loses Vote On File Standards

Microsoft Corp. has failed in a first step to win enough support to make the data format behind its flagship Office software a global standard, the International Standards Organization said Tuesday.

This weekend's vote by standards agencies from 104 nations did not provide the two-thirds majority needed to give Microsoft's format the ISO stamp of approval. But they will meet again in February to try to seek a consensus, and Microsoft could win them over at last.

ISO approval for Microsoft's Open Office XML would encourage governments and libraries to recognize the format for archiving documents, which in turn could help ensure that people using different technologies in the future could still open and read documents written today in Open Office XML.

Approval of its system as a standard would also help Microsoft tamp down competition from the Open Document Format, an international standard created by open source developers and pushed by such Microsoft rivals as IBM Corp.

Massachusetts state government stirred huge interest in the matter when it advocated saving official documents for long-term storage in the nonproprietary ODF format. That prompted Microsoft to seek recognition of Open XML by the global standards body, an effort that was backed by Apple Inc., Novell Inc. and the Library of Congress.

Microsoft has offered to license Open Office XML for free to anyone who wants to build products that access information stored in Office documents. It claims the format is richer than ODF because, being based on XML computer language, it can store the layout of spreadsheets and legal documents created with Office 2007.

But Shane Coughlan of the Free Software Foundation Europe, a group of open source developers, questioned whether Open Office XML would truly live up to its name and be open to all. Coughlan said it was unclear whether some of the code requires Microsoft's permission to be used.

"It is important that everyone owns their data, that access does not depend on any one company," he said. "Any serious corporation or government should be dubious about using it if the legality is unclear."

Publishing an open standard means it will be available to everyone, a sort of Rosetta stone that makes sure the key documents of today - whether they be legal texts, novels-in-progress or accounting spreadsheets - don't become unreadable hieroglyphics to future generations.

Despite losing the initial round of voting with ISO, Microsoft was confident of future success, contending that many of the ISO members that did not vote for the format said they would do so when certain criticisms have been addressed.

"This preliminary vote is a milestone for the widespread adoption of the Open XML formats around the world for the benefit of millions of

customers," said Microsoft's general manager for interoperability, Tom Robertson. "We believe that the final tally in early 2008 will result in the ratification of Open XML as an ISO standard."

According to ISO, Microsoft had 53 percent of the votes in favor instead of the 66 percent it needed.

The ISO process is essentially a debate that tries to fix outstanding problems so a format can win sufficient support. But Coughlan said Microsoft's heavy lobbying for Open Office XML had showed that ISO selection needs to be reviewed to make sure one voice could not shout louder than others. Coughlan and others have alleged that Microsoft unduly influenced the industry committees that advise national standards bodies on ISO votes.

Microsoft counters that IBM has been behind the efforts against Open Office XML.

#### Microsoft Antitrust Compliance On Track

Microsoft Corp. has submitted a test version of its Windows Vista operating system with features that make it easier to use non-Microsoft programs to search PC hard drives, according to a report issued by the Justice Department last Friday.

The report, a regular update on Microsoft's compliance with a 2002 antitrust settlement, said the Redmond, Wash.-based company was on schedule in other areas, including the massive task of rewriting documentation it provides to licensees of its technology.

Microsoft agreed to make changes to Vista in response to antitrust complaints from Google Inc., which in June said Microsoft's hard-drive search program was interfering with Google's own tool.

The Justice Department said preliminary testing shows the new version, which will let Vista users set a competing search program as their default and see it in the Windows Start menu, works as expected. The changes will be available in Service Pack 1, a package of upgrades and fixes expected in the first quarter of 2008, the department said.

The department also said in its report that it is looking into differences between original technical documentation and rewritten versions from Microsoft, and that it is testing fixes Microsoft made to some software.

Microsoft has been the subject of antitrust investigations since the early 1990s. The U.S. government and many states sued the company, and the court found Microsoft was using its operating system dominance to quash other types of competing software, including Netscape's Web browser. This led to a 2002 settlement and a consent decree that says Microsoft must help rivals build software that runs smoothly on Windows, among other conditions.

Most of the terms of the consent decree are set to expire in November, but the Justice Department has extended through 2009 its oversight of Microsoft's technical documentation and licensing program.

On Thursday, a group of states led by California submitted a report to the

U.S. District Court judge who oversees Microsoft's compliance with the settlement, which said ending oversight in November doesn't allow enough time to review the antitrust implications of Windows Vista. A hearing is set for Sept. 11 in U.S. District Court in Washington with Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly.

Also in September, a European court is set to rule on Microsoft's antitrust appeal. The European Union has levied more than a billion dollars in fines against the software maker for depriving competitors of technical information, and charging too much for some licenses.

#### Judge OKs Settlement In Microsoft Case

A district court judge on Friday approved the \$179.95 million settlement in the Iowa class-action lawsuit against Microsoft Corp.

The approval pays the attorneys who brought the suit seven years ago \$75 million in fees and costs, an amount legal experts said is likely a record in the state.

Polk County District Court Judge Scott Rosenberg concluded that the settlement was fair and reasonable and said he would enter an order Friday finalizing it.

Des Moines attorney Roxanne Conlin and Richard Hagstrom, an attorney with a Minneapolis law firm, filed suit against Redmond, Wash.-based Microsoft, claiming the company engaged in anticompetitive conduct that caused customers to pay more for software than they would have if there had been competition.

The lawsuit initially sought more than \$330 million on behalf of Iowans who bought Microsoft computer software between 1994 and 2006.

The settlement finalized Friday was announced in April.

=~==~==

Atari Online News, Etc. is a weekly publication covering the entire Atari community. Reprint permission is granted, unless otherwise noted at the beginning of any article, to Atari user groups and not for profit publications only under the following terms: articles must remain unedited and include the issue number and author at the top of each article reprinted. Other reprints granted upon approval of request. Send requests to: [dpj@atarinews.org](mailto:dpj@atarinews.org)

No issue of Atari Online News, Etc. may be included on any commercial media, nor uploaded or transmitted to any commercial online service or internet site, in whole or in part, by any agent or means, without the expressed consent or permission from the Publisher or Editor of Atari Online News, Etc.

Opinions presented herein are those of the individual authors and do

not necessarily reflect those of the staff, or of the publishers. All material herein is believed to be accurate at the time of publishing.